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Check Your List Twice: Drive Sober and Buckle Up

IDOT partnering with law enforcement to keep roads safe over holidays

CHICAGO –The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Illinois State Police (ISP) and local police throughout the state are teaming up to make sure driving sober and buckling up are a holiday tradition. As part of the national Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over campaign, nearly 200 law enforcement agencies will be out in force across Illinois in an end-of-year push to drive down fatalities.

“The most important gift your friends and family want is you home safely,” said Priscilla Tobias, director of IDOT’s Office of Program Development. “Driving zero fatalities to reality is an ambitious but achievable goal that requires the cooperation of every motorist on Illinois roads. Please, buckle up and drive sober this holiday season.”

Enforcement will take place around the clock, but heightened during the nighttime hours. Motorists will see roadside safety checks, hundreds of seat belt-enforcement zones and extra patrols looking for impaired drivers and seat belt-law violators.

“DUI is one of the most preventable factors in holiday fatal traffic crashes,” said ISP Director Leo P. Schmitz. “Throughout the holidays, the ISP will conduct extra patrols and roadside safety checks with an emphasis on removing impaired drivers. Help make this a better holiday for everyone by designating a driver before you celebrate. Remember, Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over.”

Crash data for the month of December from 2011-2015 show that fatalities occurring during late-night hours had a much higher percentage of impaired drivers. The highest percentage came between midnight and 3 a.m., when 64 percent of drivers in fatal crashes were at or above the legal limit. December data also show the lowest use of seat belts by vehicle occupants killed in crashes occurred at night, with the 9 p.m.-to-11:50 p.m. timeframe at just 24 percent of motorists properly restrained.

The holiday crackdown comes as traffic fatalities are up across the nation. As of Dec. 19, 1,034 people have died this year on Illinois roads. A total of 998 people died in crashes in all of 2015. The Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over and Click It or Ticket programs are funded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and administered by IDOT in Illinois, with the support of ISP and local law enforcement.